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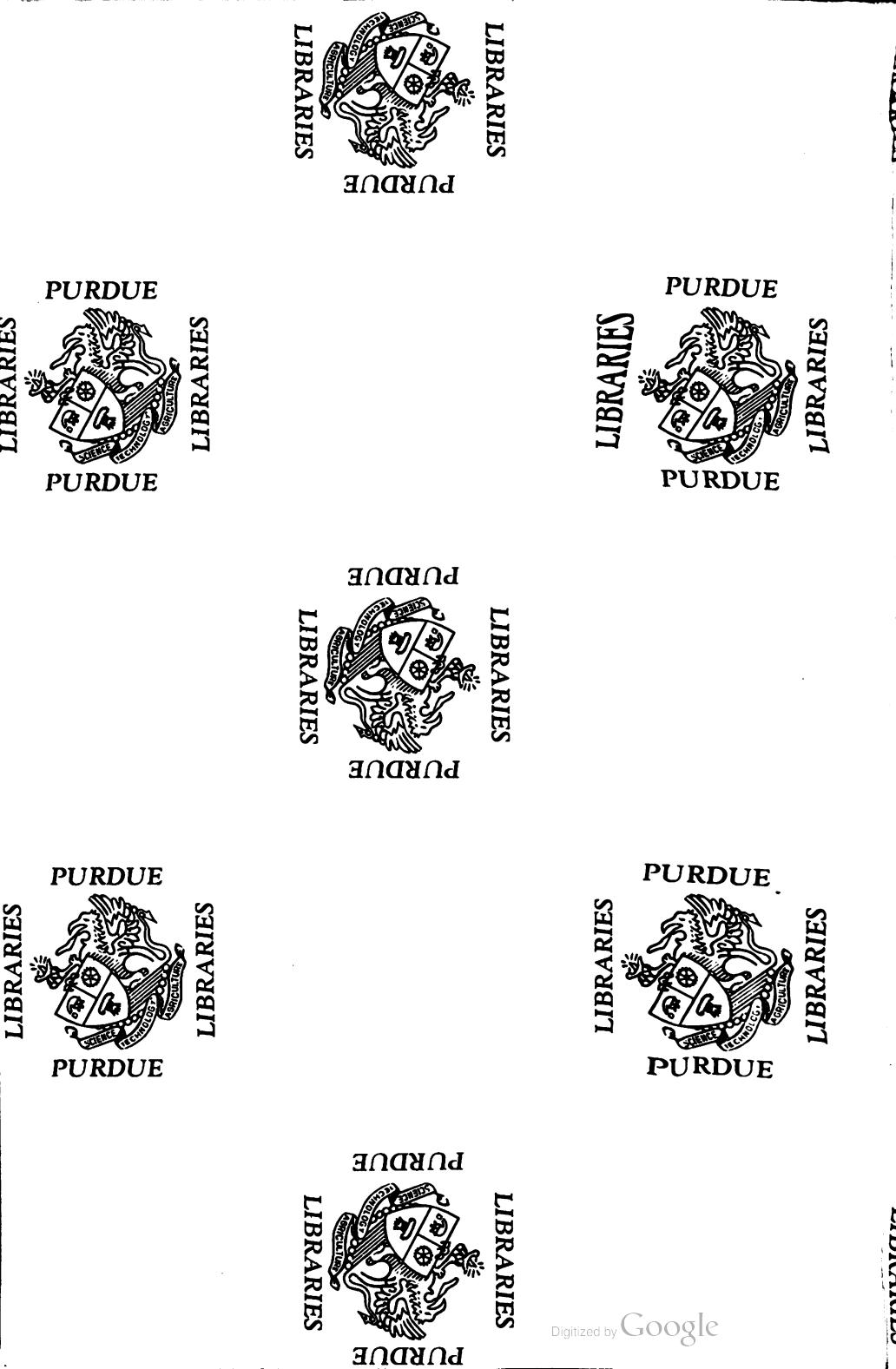
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No. 3

M.H.R.A.

BULLETIN OF THE MODERN
HUMANITIES RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

Edited by

H. J. CHAYTOR

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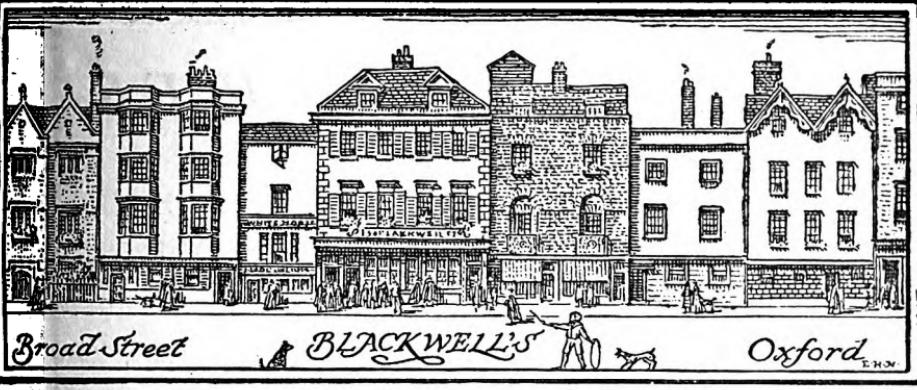
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MOLIÈRE AS A REFORMER

I

WHETHER one is bitterly censorious, like Veuillot, or unreservedly commendatory, like most other students of Molière, emphasis never fails to be placed upon the moral content of Molière's plays. This is perhaps natural, for without doubt the plays owe much of their popularity and perennial interest to their moral vigour. But in confining critical interest principally to moral content, sight has been lost of the very important fact that the plays owe their popularity and survival largely to other highly essential qualities. They owe a great deal to the peculiarities of Molière's own temperament and to his rich opportunities for experience, and to the vicissitudes of the time. To say this, is not to make a revelation ; but it is an attempt to call attention to neglected factors of some importance. We are never permitted to forget for a moment that he ridiculed hypocrisy, avarice, paternal selfishness, unreasonable conjugal severity, personal affectations, and medical quackery that paraded as omniscience. One writer says : "Alors, on voit jusqu'où peut aller l'extravagance humaine nourrie par une passion." But he neglects to observe that in the comic possibilities of the extravagance itself Molière found as much of interest as in the unfortunate moral consequences to which it might lead. What makes this belief plausible is that in real life the Orgons, the Jourdains, and the Pourceaugnacs do not go to such logical extremities. It is the extravagance and the implied comic possibilities, as well as the moral consequences of the acts of these people, that interest Molière and make us laugh. Thus the application of his misanthropic humour to the march of human passion is the absolute verity of his work.

The common practice of emphasizing only the moral qualities in Molière's plays raises the legitimate question, "Did he ever write a genuine *comédie à thèse*?" Of all the human vices and follies that Molière satirized, not one was controversial. Not one dealt with a debatable question. Not one required for proof the application of his unlimited artistic resources. Not one could raise a doubt as to the entire correctness of his view of the question at hand. Yet, why did he in each case execute a careful, acutely concentrated, and consciously directed thrust upon a single objective? Was it to teach the public what already everyone knew and no one questioned? Was it to show that obvious popular platitudes about hypocrisy and folly were quite just?

To believe that this is true is to insist that he was using his talents on redundancies, and to declare that in his plays his genius made no distinct and peculiar contribution. Such an attitude makes no allowance for the very natural desire to create—a desire that arises from pure gusto and generosity of spirit. It makes no allowance for the more than mild doubts he entertained as to the perfectibility of mankind. Molière belonged too much to the practical world of reality to entertain illusions in regard to the effectiveness of comic homilies; for keen observation must have shown him that drama could do little against settled habits and fixed attitudes of mind, that were the result of years of experience and perhaps racial peculiarities. Hence what Molière set out to do, as a sensible man, was, not to be a moral preceptor, but to entertain himself and his audiences with an exuberant capering around situations involving moral questions, and to let the moral questions take care of themselves. This freshness of mind and animal exuberance have led to critical querulousness, like the following by Weiss: "Mais il y a aussi le défaut de Molière, le défaut de l'artiste; it n'avait pas la délicatesse de touche, le fini et la politesse." Again, "Ces femmes qui à peine entrées dans la vie, savent être absolument insensibles pour ceux qui doivent être victimes," and that they are not at all "femmes à épouser." Again, ". . . la délicatesse leur manque, ainsi que le charme et la fraîcheur. Toutes les jeunes filles, par exemple, ont l'air d'être des veuves, . . . et elles combinent avec art, avec aplomb, avec assurance, leurs luttes tantôt contre leurs pères, tantôt contre leurs futurs; toutes ces demoiselles sont promptes et hardies." Thus by a series of logical subtleties the critic builds up profoundly moral principles for the criticism of figures which the dramatist intended only as simple and comic devices. Thus instead of the straightforward Molière, we have him commentated, annotated, amplified, and harassed with metaphysical irrelevancies that have marred the honest simplicity of the original. When a

critic thus sees man, not with Molière, as a natural phenomenon, but in the light of his own particular moral obsessions, and when he complains because the dramatist has chosen those characters which best answer the needs of their creator's temperament and the aim to produce laughter, he is complaining that Rubens did not paint Whistler's etherealized ladies.

Because Molière possessed courage as well as talent it is easy to assume that he was zealous to reform some of the absurdities and abuses of his time. The additional quality of imagination that accompanied this courage, the power, not of imaginative invention, but of penetrating to the hidden truths of his environment, enabled him to represent the extravagances of human folly so vividly that the artistic clarity and vigour were easily mistaken for moral indignation and desire to effect reforms. But many facts seem to indicate that he but incidentally and lightly identified himself with one side of a moral problem in a play, being generally content to amuse and produce laughter by visualizing clearly and by anticipating precisely all the implications and consequences of the traits he had given a character. Besides this, his misanthropic interest in man, the artistic warmth and richness which his ardent spirit lent to his creations—in a word, the feeling of wholeheartedness—all that made easy the assumption that he was primarily the standard-bearer of an ethical principle. J. J. Weiss, though not always happy in his comments, makes this sound observation : “ . . . il avait aussi par je ne sais quelle combinaison de la nature, l'esprit et l'humeur qui remettent tout en sa place et envisagent le monde avec ses proportions véritables.”

The zeal and animation that consistently run through his work should be emphasized in and for themselves without relation to any outside motive, moral or other. Writing was to Molière an artistic necessity and a means of satisfying his enthusiasm. Everywhere his plays reveal an intensity and abundance that seem remote from a coldly studied chiselling of material to prove a thesis. Often in an abandon of gusto, in the grip of an overpowering desire to express a subject with which he was overflowing, and in a revelry of mockery and jest, he would deluge his subject with scenes unnecessary to his plots. Wherever he turned he was met with abundant material to supply his zest for derision, and, far from quarrelling with this world, he often seems to show a sardonic tolerance and a perverse affection for it. He seems to say playfully : “ I know I ought to scorn these fools, and to despise these knaves and downright villains; but how can I when they give me so much amusement ? ”

These facts indicate that, as opposed to an ethical basis for Molière's plays, there is a less lofty, perhaps, but more important

combination of circumstances to which they primarily owe their composition. The consideration and appraisal of this neglected combination of circumstances, regardless of the high degree of incidental moral significance which exists in his plays, will be the thesis of this paper.

II

A single glance at the list of titles of Molière's plays shows how easy it is to assume that he was preoccupied with moral problems, and to overlook the fact that they contain the superlative comic material which his own experience and the public taste showed was most likely to please. An array of such titles as *L'École des Maris*, *L'École des Femmes*, *Le Tartuffe ou L'Imposteur*, *L'Avare*, at once suggests that the writer was identifying himself with one side of a moral issue. To a slightly lesser degree the same intention is felt to be true of such milder plays as *Les Précieuses Ridicules*, *Le Malade Imaginaire*, and *Les Femmes Savantes*.

From these titles alone one gets the impression that, if nothing more, Molière is here the reformer of mild absurdities, and that with the weapon of ridicule he is aiming to obliterate foolish and unnecessary frailties by which man abridges his dignity and happiness.

Likewise the occasional speeches of a character seem to support the theory of reform or strong moral censure. But, for instance, Sganarelle's frequent and violent outbursts against his master Don Juan's unmitigated depravity cannot be regarded as an expression of the dramatist's personal views. Molière may remain a wholly admirable man and yet not feel impelled to show indignation with a villain. Although Sganarelle's words may represent Molière's sentiments if he were called upon to judge Don Juan, we must not regard them as a pronouncement by Molière, but rather as the censure of a scrupulous servant who has been shocked by his master's wickedness. Sganarelle is here speaking as much for himself and as little for Molière as he is when he cries, ". . . tout le monde est content, il n'y a que moi seul de malheureux. Mes gages, mes gages, mes gages!"

In the *Placets* addressed to the king on the subject of the proscription of *Tartuffe* appear very many correct and even edifying thoughts: "Le devoir de la comédie étant de corriger les hommes en les divertissant, j'ai cru que, dans l'emploi où je me trouve, je n'avais rien de mieux à faire que d'attaquer par des peintures ridicules les vices de mon siècle."

Nothing, apparently, could have expressed his intentions as a reformer more clearly! But this is more apparent than real, for it must be remembered that, whatever his purpose in writing the play, he had been attacked on religious and moral grounds, so that, in defending himself, he was obliged to meet his enemies with religious and moral arguments. His posterior reasoning here is not unlike the process by which Balzac and Zola arrived at the names *Comédie Humaine* and *Rougon-Macquart Family* for their great series. In common with Molière's edifying propriety in the *Placets* these names were a mere afterthought, a questionable formula designed to suggest breadth of conception and unity of purpose in what was merely casual and incidental. *Tartuffe* is no more to be taken as a work of reform for Molière's saying so than the works of Balzac and Zola are to be taken seriously as a representation of France. What it represents, like any other work of art, is its author's genius finding expression for a passing mood, and not a permanent spiritual condition.

III

If Molière's interest in his subjects was not essentially moral, then what was it? It appears that many of his topics were the common fare of the dramatist of his day. Thus his choice of material was often only obedience to established theatrical conventions. He knew, too, by long years of experience with theatrical tradition that a market was always ready for the cuckold, the overbearing parent or guardian who was made to be tricked, the presumptuous pedant, and the doctor of medicine. He very early recognized these as the staples of comedy and farce, sure of winning public approval. A contempt for popular approval, a confidence in his own convictions as against those of the public, an eloquent disregard of the meaner practicalities, was no more to be found in the author than in his characters. After all he had suffered in the detested provinces he was not disposed to let anything interfere with his success in Paris. And what he for the moment of getting established, when difficulties were great, detested even more than the provinces was the Paris which he desired not to reform but to capture. In the preface to *Les Précieuses Ridicules* he calls Parisians "mauvais singes dignes d'être bernés," an echo of the bitterness and heartburnings of his attempts to get a footing in the capital. But in this same preface, conscious of the great success of the play, he breathes another sentiment, stronger and gayer—it is the pleasure, the immense and almost foolish joy of feeling that at last he amounted to something in Paris.

The facts of his career as well as his statements that might be construed to represent his dramatic credo emphasize the view that he considered it his first duty to amuse people if he was to succeed. As an actor-manager and playwright, with a background of long lean years in the provinces, he made it his business to stimulate profitable laughter, even if it meant stripping away a great deal of delicacy and exquisite moral fastidiousness in his plays. This sensible indifference to moral didacticism led him to make much of those low types of characters which may have offended the précieux, but which produced laughter, and did not offend his more robust nature. That is why he has so many characters to whom no moral significance can be attached, but who are unquestionably funny—the bourgeois, the peasant, and the valet whose highest ideal is not to be thrashed.

These facts are the obstacles in the way of reading moral connotations into a number of characters which are often supposed to have particular ethical significance. In this respect it is difficult to regard Don Juan's deception of the two silly peasant wenches Charlotte and Mathurine as an aggravation of viciousness. There is some justification for believing that Molière would not weigh such a lapse too seriously nor treat it too severely in real life, by reason of which it is not to be assumed that he regarded Don Juan's betrayal of the two women wholly in the light of an intensification of Don Juan's villainy. But what is unmistakably clear is that the scene is excellent farce. Similarly, in the trickery and precocious cleverness of Agnès, Louison, Dorimène, Elise, Angélique, and Isabelle it is difficult to concede that Molière intended to suggest the natural dishonesty and faithlessness of women, or the inevitability of the course of young love, or the folly of trying to oppose it. It seems more likely that he created these characters to give his audiences the pleasure of seeing trickery, which they always heartily enjoyed, especially when it was used to circumvent irascible old age and to advance the romances of youth. The taste for this already existed in the public, and Molière created to please it and not to edify. As long as he continued to do this, he was secure in the knowledge that he would succeed practically.

Nowhere is there less reason for discovering moral significance than in Molière's treatment of conjugal trickery in *L'École des Maris* and *L'École des Femmes*. In these some see an argument against the marriage of an elderly man and a vivacious young woman, others an argument against severity in the treatment of a wife, particularly if she be much younger than the husband. Still others see in it a reflection of Molière's own sorrowful experiences with his young wife Armande Béjart. The impressive fact is that all these views are based on unnecessary subtleties. A cursory glance through almost

any work on the life and manners of the time will show that the farcical qualities and pure absurdities of domestic infelicity were so prominent that no dramatist, and particularly no comic dramatist, could afford to treat the subject seriously ; or if he were foolish enough to do so, that he would not be taken seriously. In Taine's *Ancien Régime* appears the anecdote of a nobleman who, on entering his wife's room suddenly and finding her being made love to by another, took off his hat and saluted her, saying, " Oh, my dear, how can you be so careless ! Suppose it had not been your husband who opened the door ! "

It is well to take this with a salty grain of remembrance that Taine is not only an historian but an artist who must heighten effects when he is carried away by enthusiasm for his subject. But after due allowance has been made for artistic exaggeration, the essential reality remains that the matter was not considered as a dire woe calling for reform, but as the subject of amusing comedies which could induce in an agreeably disposed audience a feeling of good-natured and cynical amusement. When another writer says : " Le bourgeois de Molière n'accepte pas qu'on doive défendre son honneur domestique ; un personnage de Molière dit quelque part qu'il n'y a que les nobles à qui il appartienne de venger de tels affronts," we cannot help feeling that he is censuring either Molière's injustice to the bourgeois or the bourgeois' pusillanimity. At any rate he is censuring something that he considers a moral defect in somebody, a matter with which the dramatist was not much concerned in this place. It seems in this instance that Taine's reconstruction of the spirit of the past and Molière's diagnosis, with his finger hard on the pulse of his age, give a truer picture of the situation.

A. E. FREEMAN.

(*To be continued.*)

**A FRAGMENT OF THE "MIROIR" OR
"EVANGILES DES DOMEES" OF
ROBERT DE GRETHAM**

IN the last number of this Bulletin Mr. Chaytor published a copy of a fragment of *Florence de Rome*, taken from a collection of portions of MSS. belonging to Mr. S. C. Cockerell, Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, and mentioned the existence in this collection of a single sheet of the *Evangiles des Domées*. It is interesting to have proof that another MS. of this work at one time existed, as in the well-known MS., G.G. i. i. of the University of Cambridge, it runs to some 20,000 lines.¹ Its author is one Robert de Gretham, whose object in writing his long poem was to put within the reach of the lay public the weekly gospel, together with an appropriate commentary. He dedicates his work to his "tres chiere dame Aline." The Oxford MS., Douce 210, contains an incomplete work, entitled *Corset*, written by a certain Robert, who, as chaplain, dedicates his efforts to his "tres chier seignor Alain." Excerpts of this were published by Paul Meyer in the *Bulletin de la Société des Anciens Textes* (1880, p. 64), who suggested, and repeated in *Romania*, XV., p. 297, that "Alain" and "Aline" are husband and wife, and that the two works are by the same author.

Mr. Cockerell's fragment is a single sheet, measuring in its present state 172 millimetres by 132; on the recto are two columns of 41 lines, and on the verso two columns of 39 lines; five lines appear to have been cut from the top of each column, so that, allowing for the five lines and a margin, the pages were probably about 202 millimetres high (or about 8 inches). The writing is in a good hand of the second half of the thirteenth century, and quite legible except where the page is dirty. The fragment corresponds to folio 167 recto b seq. in the University MS., with a few omissions and additions. To judge by the collation, the scribe was a more careful craftsman than either the scribe of the University MS. or of the British Museum copy.

The fragment contains the latter part of the story of the temptation (Matt. iv. 5) and that of the woman of Canaan, who

¹ For an account of this MS. see *Romania*, XV., p. 296, and for that of the British Museum, see Varnhagen in *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, I., p. 541, and *Romania*, VII., p. 344. The Trinity College MS., mentioned by P. Meyer in *Rom.*, XV., p. 298, does not seem to have been recovered.

besought our Lord to cure her daughter vexed with a devil
(Matt. xv. 21 seq.):

- D'iloecl l'ad tantost porté,
Et el pinnacle l'ad posé.
Li pinnacles uns lius esteit
4 El temple u l'em la lei liseit ;
De quinze degrez out halture
Pur bien escuter la liture
U l'em la lei en halt liseit ;
8 Pur le halt ki feit l'aveit
Ke tuz ki oent sermuner
Et quor et oilz deivent lever,
Et les oreilles pur oïr
12 Et le visage pur desir.
El pinnacle dit li malfez
A Jhesu : "Aval descendez,
Ke li angle te porterunt
16 Ke blescer pas ne te larrunt."
Veez del diable k'il ad fait,
Nis en saint liu ad sun aguett ;
El liu u l'em deit sermuner
20 Feit li doctur de mal penser
Feit le penser d'enorguillir,
U de la gent le los oïr,
U de terrïen gueredun,
24 U par tant pert il sun sermun ;
Cil ki oent nel perdent mie,
Mes il pert tut par cuvertise ;
Quant k'il querit el ke Deu amur
28 Quant a sei pert tut sun labur.
Li malfé dit : "Met tei aval,
Si fiz es Deu, n'i averas mal."
Mes Jhesu ki bien le saveit,
32 Ki fiz Deu e Deu esteit,
Ne volt del pulpit avaler,
Ke ceo estereit Deu tempter ;
Ke ki de tant se sëure
36 Ke sun cors met en aventure
Del murir u del eschaper,

G.G.
167 V^a.

Variants in G.G. i. i. : 5 *out haut tur.* 6 *P. e. la lei entur.* 10 *Od q. od. o.*

15 *deporterunt.* 16 *lerrunt.* 18 *Mais a seinz lius.* 19 *les lius u il d. s.*

- Ceo [est] sanz faille Deu tempter.
 Mes ore i metez vostre entente
 40 Cum li malfé escrit presente ;
 Il presente la prophecie . . .
 Col. (b) Mes celui ki fet le Jhesu dit
 Tost l'averat parcu et despit,
 44 Ke nul ne deit sun Deu tempter
 Pur metere sei en encumbrer.
 Adam mult folement tempta
 Quant pur saveir del fruit manga,
 48 Ke par desir de cel saveir
 Devint il fols et tut si eir.
 Quant ke Adam nus mesfist,
 Tut nus restora Jhesu Crist.
 52 Pur nus se suffri il tempter
 Et venquit pur nus deliverer.
 Puis le mist Satan en un munt
 Et li mustra tuz les biens del mund,
 56 Et dit ke tut ceo li durreit
 Se il aurer le voleit.
 Ore veez, seignur, del felun
 Cum il le mund ad en bandun,
 60 Cum il par cest mondein richesce
 La gent absorbe, fieret et blesce.
 Cels ki (k'il) ne poet par glutinie,
 Ne par gloire de ceste vie,
 167 V°b. 64 Tuiz les absorbe par avoir ;
 Par cest fait le poez saveir,
 Par avoir et par seignurie
 Cunquierit il tute ceste vie ;
 68 A peine purrez un truver
 Ki n'aime avoir u seignurer ;

39 *ore* omitted. 40 *l'escrit.* The five lines cut from the top are in MS. G.G. as follows:

*Pur recoverir sa mal veisdie,
 Si fuit trestut li suduant
 Aucun veir dit dirrunt avant
 Et par taunt fuit lur desir
 Pur les oianz par bel plaisir.*

Lines 50-51 are replaced by :

*Mais de quanque Adam nous mesfist
 Jhesu amendment nous mist.*

55 *li* omitted.

Et quant [ke] il purrunt enteindre
Ne se larrant pur Deu enpeindre;

- 72 Tant sunt aver del althur
Ne la larrant pur Deu amur.
Par tant averunt li malfé
Quant rien n'aiment encuntre Dé ;

- 76 Dunt avera cil sun never
Ki ne l'ose pur Deu doner.
Ki n'ose sun muncel tasser,
Mes tut tens i volt masser,
80 Quant il offre pur accreistre
Dun[t] n'est il ses deus et sun meistre ;
Tut alsi est de seignurie. . . .
Et sis talenz est tut en terre

- 84 Dun[t] averat cil ceo ke volt quere.
Et en l'evangile Deu retreit
Sers est al peché cil ki feit.
E Davi dit en sun sermun :

- 88 Si richesce vient a bandun
Guardez ke le quor n'i metez ;
Ceo est ke trop ne l'amez.
Pur ceo respundi bien Jhesus

- 92 Par quei le diable fu confus :
" Tun seignur Deu aoreras,
Et fidement lui serviras."
Ne devez pas servir richesce,

- 96 Ne seignur[ie] ki tant blesce,
Ne richesce amer par desir,
Mes sul [pur] la char sustenir,
Et le surplus duner pur Dé

- 100 En amur et en charité.
Ki si le fait par bon delit,
Tost averat Satan descunfit ;

Col. (c)

G G.
168 r^a.

61 assorbe. 70 ateindre. 72 del hautur. 76 averunt il lur d.
77 Que il n'osent.

77 Qu'il n'osent lur m. 79 coveitent amasser. 82 The five lines cut
from the top are in G.G. as follows :

*Que l'em ne veut guerpir pur vie
Mas regner par surquiderie ;
En orgoille de sa maistrie
Et despire la povre gent
Et riens aver fors sun talent.*

89 Ps. lxii. 10 92 vencus. 94 Et lui sulement. 96 seignurie.
98 pur la char.

- Et li angle le guarderunt,
 104 Et de tuz mals defenderunt.
 Jhesus ki pur nus fu tempté,
 Et pur nus venqui le malfé,
 Il nus duinst issi jutier
 108 Et veintre alsi nostre adverser,
 Ke nus puissum a lui venir
 Et par lui od ses seinz joir.

DOMINICA iii en XL. SECUNDUM MATTHÆUM.

Egressus Jhesus secessit in partes Tyri et Sidonis et ecce mulier Chananaea a finibus illis egressa, etc.

- Jhesu se vint en la partie
 112 Des citez Tyre et Sidonie ;
 Une mulier d'iloeu isseit,
 Ki en Chana nurrie esteit,
 (En) empres lui diseit a grant cri:
 116 " Merciz aet de moi, le fiz Davi ;
 Ma fille mult est travallé . . .
 Col. (d) Sul as brebis sui enveié
 Ki de Jerusalem sunt mesalé."
 120 Cele vint et si l'aura,
 Et k'il l'aidast mult le ruva.
 G.G. Et il respundi : " N'est pas biens
 168 r°b. Metre le pain de fiz as chiens."
 124 Et ele dit : " Sire, veirement,
 Li chael mangue suvent
 Des mies ki des tables cheent
 U lur seignurs al menger seent."
 128 Jhesus respundi en disant :
 " O mulier, ta fei est grant,
 Si cum tu vols, si seit il feit."
 Et sa fille saine lores esteit.

101 MS. fiat. 110 MS. has : *Et par lui od tui joir amur*; the reading of G.G. has been adopted, but it might be possible to correct : *Par lui od lui amur joir*. There is a mark on the MS. which might be to indicate a transposition, but it is unclear. The missing lines are in G.G. :

Et de diable turmenté,
Et Jhesu nul mot ne respondist.
Mais sis disciple li unt dit :
" Laissez, sire, pur sun cri."
Et cil tantost lur respondi : . . .

- 132 Icest num Tyre fort signefie,
Et Sydon male venerie.
A Tyre et Sydon s'en vint Crist
Quant il nostre nature prist
- 136 Pur delivrer nostre humanité
De diable et de sa poesté,
Pur nus deliverer de cel sort
Ki treit a la durable mort ;
- 140 Et de la male venerie
Dunt Satan out la baillie ;
Ke suz ciel n'ad tel veneur
Cum est li diables nuit et jur ;
- 144 Sun arch est chescun mal pensez
Dunt la corde est sa volentez.
L'arch tent quant hum ad delit,
Treit quant fait sun appetit.
- 148 Ses cheens sunt ses enticemenz,
Sa prei est cest mundein delit
Par ki les almes descunfit ;
Ke quant k'averas en ceste vie
- 152 En veir est veine venerie.
Dunt saint Davi el psalter dit,
Ki plein ert del saint esperit,
"Nostre an present si cum iraigne . . ."

121 *pria.* 125 *les chaneleles [sic] mangent.* 130 *ore feit.* 131 *Sa fille tantost saine esteit.* 132 The MS. writes *sort*, but G.G. *fort*. In the commentators the words Tyre and Sidon are glossed: "rock" and "hunting," but in view of the *sort* in line 138, vouched for by both MSS., perhaps *sort* should stand in 132. 136 G.G. omits *nostre*.

146 *le hume.* 147-150 wanting in G.G. 154 Ps. xc. 9, *Anni nostri sicut aranea meditabuntur.* The line and the following in G.G. are :

*Nostre an present si cum araine
Qui tant taille fet baraine.*

A. T. BAKER.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

THE following Publications have been received, and forwarded to the Editor of the *Bibliography of English Language and Literature*: *Boletim bibliografico da Biblioteca da Universidade de Coimbra*, Nos. 1 to 6, January to June. *Low Comedy as a Structural Element in English Drama*, by Ola Elizabeth Winslow (University of Chicago Libraries Publication). *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*; edited by Carleton Brown; vol. xlii., No. 3; September, 1927. *Philological Quarterly*; vol. vi., No. 3; July, 1927. *Philological Quarterly*; vol. vi. No. 4; October, 1927.

INQUIRIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE REV. CONRAD WALMSLEY, The Friary, South Ascot, Berks, desires information concerning the authorship of *A Comparative View of the Social Life of England and France*, etc., by the editor of Madame de Deffand's Letters (London, printed for Longmans, Rees Orme, Brown and Green, 1828). The copy is inscribed, "To Anne Woranzoff, Countess of Boucourlin, with every sentiment of faithful friendship from the author." Information upon this Countess is also desired.

Mr. Robert E. Spiller of Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pa., U.S.A., is editing Fenimore Cooper's *Travels in Europe*, which have never been reissued since their publication in 1836-38. He writes :

"I am making an effort to collect as many as possible of Cooper's letters from abroad to his friends in America and his letters to his many foreign friends after his return. I know that there are many such in existence, and it is my belief that they, together with the books of travel themselves, will throw a new and interesting light upon Cooper's place in American literary history. Cooper was abroad from 1826 to 1832. He was in England in 1828, and knew intimately Samuel Rogers, Walter Scott, Sotheby, Coleridge, Lord Holland, and many

others in these circles. I am eager to obtain information about such letters or copies of them, with or without permission to publish them."

Professor V. de Sola Pinto of 3, Orchards Way, Highfield, Southampton, would be glad of any information concerning the unpublished MSS. of Peter Sterry, *Cambridge Platonist* and *Chaplain to Oliver Cromwell*. The MSS., consisting of letters and philosophical treatises, were in the possession of Sterry's descendant, Mrs. Wynter of Wodville, Taunton, up to a few years ago, when Mrs. Wynter died. They are wanted as material for a study of the life and works of Peter Sterry.

We are glad to announce that Miss Helen M. Briggs, Faulkner Fellow in the University of Manchester, is engaged upon an edition of Buoncompagno da Signa and his *Oliva*, which at present exists only in MSS.

MR. N. T. HARRIS, 8, Kerrison Road, Ealing, London, W. 5, will be grateful for any information in response to the following query :

In the *Biographia Britannica* there is an article on Steele and a reference therein to *Memoirs* of Richard Steele (1738). The work is not, apparently, in the British Museum, nor do the eighteenth century bibliographies give any particulars. Is a copy known to exist ?

QUARTERLY NOTES

IT is with great pleasure that we welcome as our President this year Professor Carleton Brown, who was one of our first members, is editor of the *Publications* of our affiliated American Association (M.L.A.), and has always been an enthusiastic supporter of the Association and the cause for which it stands. The new President was educated at Harvard University, and held his first teaching post there as Instructor in English. From Harvard he went to Bryn Mawr, first as Associate Professor and then as Professor of English Philology. After a brief interval as Professor of English in the University of Minnesota he returned as Professor of English to Bryn Mawr, and is now Professor at New York University. Professor Brown first became known to English scholars by some of his work on Cynewulf, but his main field of interest is Middle English literature. There he has placed all scholars under a very heavy debt by his masterly *Register of Middle English Religious and Didactic Verse*, published by the Bibliographical Society in two parts (1916 and 1920). It is based on a careful study of all the MS. sources for this type of verse, and must form the basis of all new studies in this field. What treasures lie hidden is shown in the delightful *Religious Lyrics of the Fourteenth Century*, selected and edited by Professor Brown for the Oxford University Press. Fortunately we are promised further volumes on the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. We can only hope that one or other of them may appear during his year of office as President of the M.H.R.A.

It is with real regret that we record the resignation from the English editorship of the *Modern Language Review*, after many years' devoted service, of Professor G. C. Moore Smith. During his tenure of this editorship, in which he succeeded Mr. G. C. Macaulay of Cambridge, Professor Moore Smith has never spared himself in order to keep the standard of the English contributions to the *Review* at the highest possible point. The Sub-Committee appointed to choose his successor has had no easy task, but it believes that a worthy holder of the editorship has been found in Dr. C. J. Sisson of University College, London, who takes office in January, 1928. Dr. Sisson, who is a graduate of Edinburgh

University and a *Docteur ès Lettres*, has had a varied career, and he brings to his new task qualities far beyond those of the contributor. From 1907 to 1909 he was English lector at Dijon University, from 1909 to 1910 lecturer at the Egyptian University of Cairo, and then for ten years Professor of English Literature at Elphinstone College, University of Bombay. After a brief interval he returned in 1922 to the College as principal, vacating this post to become University Reader in English Literature at University College, London. In 1925-26 he was visiting Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin, U.S.A. Among his recent publications are : *Le Goût Public et le Théâtre Elisabethain*, *Bibliographical Aspects of Some Stuart Dramatic Manuscripts*, and an edition of a lost play by Dekker (*Keep the Widow Waking*).

One of the most pleasant duties of the Secretary of the Modern Humanities Research Association is to welcome to this country and to be of use in various ways during the summer months to visitors from American Universities. During the past summer the Association has been in the happy position of being able to introduce a number of its American members to the owners of large private libraries in this country, and in the early autumn the Secretary received a number of gratifying testimonies to the usefulness of the Association in this respect. It is to be hoped that the number of such visitors, intent on genuine work in modern languages during the Long Vacation, will increase, and that the Association may be of increasing assistance to them. It should be remembered, however, that the office of the Association is normally closed during August and part of September ; any requests for introductions of the kind mentioned should therefore be in the Secretary's hands as early in the session as possible.

The Bibliography of English Language and Literature for 1926, edited by Miss D. Everett and Miss M. E. Seaton, was published last October, and may be obtained by members, through the Hon. Treasurer, for 3s. 3d., and by non-members, through any bookseller, for 6s. It is not for *M.H.R.A.* to review this publication, which receives an ever-growing number of press tributes from all parts of the world each year, but we may point out that as in previous years it incorporates the results of the collaboration of a large number of contributors from many countries, for whose help the Association is particularly grateful. The *Bibliography* during the last year has been suffering to some extent from its own past

success, as the early issues are now out of print with the exception of that for 1920, and many orders for past issues have had to be refused. It is to be hoped that all members, therefore, will secure their own copies of the current issue without delay.

The sales of the Index to volumes xi. to xx. of the *Modern Language Review*, which was published with volume xxi. and may be obtained separately at 5s. net, afford an interesting example of the perils of philanthropy. It was originally proposed to make the Index a part of volume xx., but the desire of the Committee of the *Modern Language Review* to give subscribers and contributors alike the same number of pages as in other years decided them to take the risk of publishing the Index separately. Although it has real value, not only to those who possess the ten volumes to which it refers, but to all who have access to these in libraries, the sales for the first year were very small, and there was a deficit on the publication of over £50. This has now been partially reduced, the number of purchasers of the Index during the past year having greatly improved. Such, however, as have not yet done so, will, it is hoped, send the additional sum of 5s. with their subscription (15s.) to the *Modern Language Review* for 1928, and so receive a copy.

The Hon. Treasurer acknowledges with many thanks the undermentioned contributions to the Capital Fund: Miss E. Derham, 14s. 3d.; Alan S. C. Ross, Esq., 10s.; N. R. Tempest, Esq., 7s. 6d.; Dr. M. R. Richter, 4s. 3d.; Professor M. L. Porter, 4s.; Miss H. M. Briggs, 2s. 6d. Total: £2 2s. 6d. We are always glad to receive these contributions, whether large or small, which are frequently and conveniently sent us together with the minimum annual subscription of 7s. 6d.

Some Recent Publications

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